

City of

Bellevue



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**DATE:** March 5, 2014

**TO:** Bellevue Transportation Commission

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**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Plan Update: Transportation Element Policy Topics

## INTRODUCTION

Bellevue is in the process of the 10-year update to the Comprehensive Plan. Both Volume 1 of the Plan (Elements) and Volume 2 of the Plan (Subarea Plans and Transportation Facility Plans) will be updated to address changed circumstances and emerging opportunities. In May and October of 2013, staff reviewed with the Commission a number of potential areas of amendment to the policies in the Transportation Element (Volume 1). Under the umbrella of the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Commission previously provided direction to modify Mobility Management Area 14, and supported new Transportation Element policy to incorporate multimodal level of service and concurrency management standards (both items were approved on the January 9, 2014 Commission agenda).

At this meeting, staff will review the major components of proposed policy updates to the Transportation Element. These recommended areas for policy updates reflect staff analysis of the changes needed to keep the transportation policies current and forward-looking. Policy amendments would also incorporate recent planning efforts such as the Transit Master Plan. Commission input is requested to ensure that the Transportation Element reflects your aspirations for mobility to, from and within Bellevue. At a subsequent meeting(s), staff will review and discuss recommended transportation policy language.

## Transportation Element

The [Transportation Element](#) of the Comprehensive Plan articulates the City's transportation goals and policy direction in 12 major topic areas:

- Transportation and Land Use
- Transportation Demand Management
- Mobility Management
- Roadway Network
- Transit
- Regional Transit
- High Capacity Transit
- Light Rail Transit
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation System
- State Highways/Corridors
- Freight Mobility
- Finance

Also incorporated in the Transportation Element are a number of tables and figures that provide additional data to support the policies. Together the goals and policies and related tables and figures represent Bellevue's mobility strategy that supports other components of the City's vision, including land use, economic development and the environment. Also, the Transportation Element must be consistent with the requirements of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) in order for the Element to be "certified" – which is an essential condition for eligibility for many PSRC-supported grant programs. PSRC assesses the consistency of policies and plans with VISION 2040 and relevant planning provisions in the Growth Management Act.

### **Transportation Element Policy**

A core interdepartmental staff team is responsible for the day-to-day effort to update the Comprehensive Plan and consists of representatives from Planning and Community Development, Transportation, Parks & Community Services, Utilities, and Development Services. Planning and Community Development is in the lead role in the Comprehensive Plan Update, since the Planning Commission is ultimately responsible for developing a recommendation for Council consideration. Transportation staff has proposed a suite of updates, amendments and policy initiatives for the Transportation Element. With concurrence of the staff team and Transportation Department management, the following major topic areas are proposed to amend the Transportation Element:

- **New Policy Areas to Fill Gaps or Support Initiatives**

- Develop policy reference for a new Transportation Master Plan  
*A Transportation Master Plan would replace the project lists in the numerous Transportation Facility Plans adopted in Volume II of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as project lists within a few of the subarea plans. Through a policy reference within the Transportation Element, the Transportation Master Plan would be as relevant as the Comprehensive Plan itself in documenting and implementing the City's mobility projects. Yet the Master Plan would be administratively updated as needed outside of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process and kept current to incorporate transportation planning work such as corridor plans and subarea plans. Including all mobility projects in a single document would allow a clear view of the relationships between various travel modes on a corridor, and support multimodal level of service objectives.*
- Multimodal Level of Service and Concurrency  
*Incorporate the Commission recommendation to establish methods to establish multimodal level of service standards and concurrency requirements, to measure and monitor all modes of travel, and to consider and implement projects to ensure mobility options are available for roadway corridors and within defined geographic areas (mobility management areas).*

- Active Transportation – Mobility Options  
*Integrate the concepts and terminology as appropriate throughout the Transportation Element. The concept of “active transportation” refers generally to human-powered transportation such as walking and bicycling. “Mobility options” refers to the range of transportation modes that are available, appropriate, intended and/or desirable for a corridor or geographic area.*
- Community/Public Health  
*Describe the relationship between active transportation/mobility options and individual and community health, including environmental factors.*
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transportation Sources  
*Document that motorized transportation is a source of air contamination in Bellevue, including emissions that contribute to global climate change. Policies would provide direction to establish and to pursue greenhouse gas emission reduction targets from transportation sources and/or the city as a whole. Transportation greenhouse gas emissions policies could be embedded in the Environmental Element together with other Air Quality policies.*
- Street Maintenance  
*The Bellevue street maintenance function recently moved to the Transportation Department. Policy review is underway and updates may be needed to reflect street maintenance scope, standards, priorities and funding.*
- Bike Sharing Program  
*Puget Sound Bike Share is establishing a presence in the Seattle metro area, with planned first phase installations in Downtown Seattle, South Lake Union, Capitol Hill, and the U District. The Downtown Transportation Plan acknowledged the potential for bike share as a viable Downtown mobility option, and a Transportation Element policy would support a potential citywide program.*
- **Policy Modification and Updates to Address Changed Circumstances**
  - Intelligent Transportation Systems  
*Embed citywide direction to implement and expand intelligent transportation systems infrastructure and technology.*
  - Transportation Demand Management  
*Expand the Transportation Demand Management section to more comprehensively address off-street parking supply and management, and draw a link between parking supply, parking cost and commute mode share.*
  - Eastside Rail Corridor

*Formerly the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) corridor, policies for the Eastside Rail Corridor would be updated to reflect the intended regional and multimodal function of the corridor, including East Link.*

- Transit Policies

*Significant rewriting and consolidating of transit policies is needed to incorporate the preliminary direction being established through the Transit Master Plan. While policy and project details would be part of the Transit Master Plan final report and adopted document, higher-level policy concepts would be embedded in the Transportation Element. These policies would include the direction toward providing abundant access, establishing frequent transit network, implementing speed and reliability enhancements and improving pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stops and stations.*

- Regional High Capacity Transit Policy Coverage and Direction

*Policies in this section would acknowledge the need to maintain and enhance transit service that connects Bellevue to the region and to advocate for significant additional regional transit service for Bellevue through a future Sound Transit ballot measure.*

- Light Rail Best Practices

*This section of detailed policies was adopted in anticipation of a light rail alignment and stations in Bellevue - as a product of a Light Rail Best Practices community involvement process. Decisions have been made regarding East Link and best practices policies can be retooled and consolidated to address current circumstances, and future considerations for light rail construction and operation.*

- Finance Policies

*Finance policies support multiple financing strategies to ensure that resources are available at the right time from the right sources to build transportation system projects. These policies could be embedded in the Capital Facilities Element in the section on Financing Systems and Revenue Sources.*

## **NEXT STEPS**

At subsequent meetings, staff will engage the Commission in a policy-by policy review of potential policy amendments to the Transportation Element. Staff will also propose amendments to update the Transportation Element maps, figures and tables, and will demonstrate consistency with the Puget Sound Regional Council certification requirements.

A recommendation from the Transportation Commission will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review – the timing for this action is yet to be precisely determined, but is likely to occur in the summer/fall of 2014.